

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD – TRIBOARD MEETING
Meeting of Monday, January 22, 2019
Ipswich Town Hall | 25 Green Street

Pursuant to Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a Triboard meeting of the Select Board and Finance Committee was held on Monday, January 22, 2019 at 7:30pm in Meeting Room A.

With a quorum present, Nishan Mootafian called the meeting to order at 7:32pm.

Select Board Members present: Nishan Mootafian, Chair; William Whitmore, Vice Chair; Linda Alexson; William Craft; Edward Rauscher

Also present: Finance Committee; Anthony Marino, Town Manager; Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools; Sarah Johnson, Finance Director; Eileen Page, Recording Secretary

Abbreviations Used: FY20, Fiscal Year 2020; COA, Council on Aging

Public Information: Agenda, Meeting Packet, FY20 Budget

Welcome/Announcements

None.

Citizen Queries

Phil Goguen (Kingfisher Road) asked who the Chair of tonight's meeting would be. Mr. Mootafian answered that it would be himself.

FY20 Budget

Mr. Marino presented a general overview of the budget. His goal is to create a budget that is clearly broken down and easy for the average citizen to understand. Mr. Marino and Ms. Johnson based the budget on conservative estimates that do not account for State aid. Mr. Marino reviewed a few items that were requested by departments and refused, such as Planning & Conservation's request for additional hours for their part time administrative assistants, a requested new backhoe by the Department of Public Works. The Council on Aging requested raises for their receptionists and van drivers to be more consistent with market rate, and a raise was able to be negotiated.

Budget highlights include a \$10,000 increase for legal spending to cover Special Legal Counsel on 40B housing projects in preparation of Bruni's Essex Pastures. The Town has contributed partial funding for a part-time archivist in the Library. The Human Resources Department has two positions funded by the Town budget, and two positions funded by the School budget. Union contracts will dictate a 1.5% increase in FY20, and Mr. Marino noted that some employees will receive a raise larger than 1.5% to be more consistent with market rates following a salary review.

Mr. Marino paused to introduce Chris Rais (Facilities Director) to the Boards. Mr. Rais is drawn to Ipswich's vibrant history and was impressed with the welcome he has received. He anticipates being busy and active in his new position.

Mr. Rauscher asked Mr. Marino to walk the Boards through the comprehensive binders presented. The first section presents a guide to the FY20 Budget, an overview of the annual budget process, an explanation of tax levies and the process of their calculation, a community profile that breaks down Ipswich's government structure, geography and demographics, budget and revenue comparisons from the past few years, a copy of the Town Charter, Select Board goals, and various Town policies. The next section is a Budget Summary, which includes a revenue budget summary, an FY20 Staffing Sheet with employee names, positions, and salaries, and Utilities allocation. The next section breaks down the individual Town Department budgets. The next section covers debt. The following section covers the Enterprise Fund, which feeds recycling and solid waste programs. The next section covers Capital Improvements, including Free Cash and individual project requests for FY20. The next section covers Economic Development, including the Planning Department's aspirations for the Hammatt Street lot and the Downtown Riverwalk extension. The next section outlines individual breakdowns on Capital requests. The next section includes

explanations of commonly referenced acronyms and phrases, such as AFSCME and Free Cash. The final section is a comparison of how Ipswich measures in spending against other communities. The entire budget is available to the public on the Town website as a PDF.

Ms. Alexson noted a \$450,000 request from the Cemetery/Parks Department for Pony Express expenses, which she said was not anticipated at the purchase of the property. Mr. Marino stated that much of that expense will be used for irrigation purposes, but does not anticipate that the entire requested amount will be used. He would like to allow the department a chance to make a case for the requested amount. Mr. Whitmore suggested that the department may be looking at their budget as a wish list, and will adjust their plans based on what is approved.

Regarding roof repairs, Chub Whitten (School Committee) asked if the proposed budget for roof repairs is in line with actual costs. Dr. Blake said that the Town and Schools are currently completing a facilities needs assessment to determine an exact estimate. For now, \$50,000 has been budgeted per school to pay for short-term repairs, and is a conservative amount. Ms. Alexson asked for an update on freezing pipes at the High School, and Dr. Blake responded that there is money allocated in the operating budget for repairs, but much of the damage done to the music department will be covered by insurances.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) would like to see a meeting held where citizens can ask questions, and expressed concern that Board members may cut them off. Mr. Mootafian replied that all Board meetings are open to the public, and every meeting is publicized online and in the *Ipswich Chronicle*. Mr. Goguen expressed concern over the expense of new hires, and Mr. Marino clarified that interviews currently being held are seeking candidates to replace former employees only. He acknowledged that while salaries must be flexible to the candidate, benefit costs are fairly standard. Mr. Goguen asked for specific budgeting on the Council on Aging. The COA has budgeted \$175,940.64 in salaries, and \$3,077 in expenses to be paid out of the General Fund, with State grants that cover a variety of programs.

New Business

None.

Old Business

None.

Miscellaneous and Correspondence

None.

Vote: Mr. Rauscher moved to adjourn, and Mr. Craft seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The Select Board adjourned at 9:12pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
01.23.19*